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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to (1) gather systematic and objective data on the alternative school and (2) identify the perceptions of teachers in both alternative and public schools about the tasks they perform and the parents and students with whom they deal. The study focused on authority structures and processes of evaluation. Data were collected on 24 alternative schools and five public schools by means of observation in the schools and by a questionnaire administered to 200 elementary and secondary teachers. Four teaching tasks were identified: Teaching Subject Matter, Character Development, Maintaining Control, and Record Keeping. Data revealed that there was more emphasis on Character Development in alternative schools and more emphasis on Teaching Subject Matter and Maintaining Control in public schools. Although public school teachers had and desired high levels of autonomy, alternative-school teachers had and wanted higher levels. It was also shown that, although the alternative-school teachers were evaluated more often and received more negative evaluations than public school teachers, for both samples evaluation was infrequent. Both groups believed that training was of little importance for successful teaching, that experience in the classroom was more helpful, and that the personality of the teacher was the most important factor in successful teaching. (Author)

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EVALUATION AND AUTHORITY IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Introductory Statement

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This Technical Report is based on an unpublished dissertation by Brian L. McCauley, "Evaluation and Authority in Radical Alternative Schools and Public Schools," Stanford University, 1971. The study was conducted as part of the work of the component on the Evaluation of Teachers in the Environment for Teaching program.

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EVALUATION AND AUTHORITY IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brian L. McCauley, Sanford M. Dornbusch, and W. Richard Scott

INTRODUCTION

This study provides systematic and objective findings on the alternative school, a new form of educational organization that is a response to discontent with the traditional public school system. It seeks to identify the perceptions of teachers in alternative and public schools concerning the tasks they perform, the persons with whom they interact, and the current and preferred forms of organizational arrangements in their schools.

We gathered data from 24 alternative schools and 5 schools in two public school districts in the San Francisco Bay area. Although it was difficult, we did obtain cooperation from many persons who were unconvinced of the value of our enterprise. Only half the teachers at the alternative schools we visited were willing to participate, but it is our opinion that their patterned responses provide clear bases for generalization about alternative schools. Since the most radical teachers were presumed to be less likely to participate in the study, our findings of differences between their perceptions and the perceptions of the conventional teachers are likely to be conservative.

The resistance of some educators to research within their organizations helps explain why this study is a first attempt to study evaluation and authority in both public and alternative schools, and to provide bases for comparison of the two systems. Up to now it has been difficult for educators to evaluate the views of people in the alternative school movement because the majority of those who have written about the alternative school have been apologists for it. These proponents of the alternative school have not attempted to gather data to support their presepctives. Indeed, they view empirical scientific research as antithetical to many of their ideological convictions.

This comparative analysis of public and alternative schools was materially aided by a theory of evaluation and authority that has been applied in diverse organizational contexts.[1] We will outline this general formulation to help explain the choice of variables for our field studies and the bases in organizational theory for our predictions. Although the

[1]The sources of our ideas concerning goal-directed behavior are rooted in the forthcoming work Evaluation and Authority, by S. M. Dornbusch and W. R. Scott. Since the work is in manuscript, we cannot make specific page references and have therefore cited only what is most directly applicable to this study.

findings of our research on public and alternative schools can be understood without complete knowledge of the theoretical orientation from which our approach derives, an acquaintance with aspects of the general concepts should make it easier to discern both the usefulness and the limits of our findings.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

An organization is a network of relations that orients and regulates the behavior of a specific set of individuals in pursuit of relatively specific goals. Performers in organizations carry out organizational tasks. A task is any activity, or set of activities, carried out to attain a goal. For our formulation we will define task as an allocated goal, since to assign a goal to an organizational participant is to allocate a task to him. Task performance will refer to the act of carrying out task activities, and the purpose of task performance will be called goal attainment.

We have a task-specific conception of authority. For teachers in our sample we selected four diverse tasks, assuming that for these specific tasks teachers would exhibit different preferred organizational arrangements, and that for each task the actual organizational arrangements would differ. We expected these results in both public and alternative schools.

When a performer is allocated a goal, that is, is given a conception of a desired end state that he is to attain, he carries out a set of task activities. If his performance produces the desired end state, he is successful. The task outcome is some end state that is compared to the specified desired end state, and from this comparison the task performer's relative success or failure is identified and an evaluation is made.

Goal-oriented activity is like following a path toward a destination. In attempting to reach a goal, the task performer may be faced with choices of alternative activities. In organizational terms, the performer's job is to decide which activity is most likely to lead to the desired end state. It is assumed that whenever possible the performer will choose the path which has the highest likelihood of bringing him successfully to the goal. The choice depends, on the performer's knowledge of which path has the highest probability of success. For teachers in our research, autonomy meant the degree to which they were allowed to choose the appropriate path to the goal.

Autonomy

The importance of autonomy is evidenced by a major study of teachers (Corwin, 1966), which found that the demands of teachers for independent decision making clashed with the bureaucratic need for close surveillance and control of task performers. Corwin noted that this problem is compounded by the growing complexities of organizations. Task performers must exhibit initiative and imagination to function properly, but in a

bureaucratic structure it is difficult for performers to demonstrate these qualities. Corwin showed that the bureaucratization of organizations in which few professionals are employed appears to diminish conflict, but when organizations staffed primarily by professionals are bureaucratized, conflict increases. Corwin's emphasis on evaluation and surveillance, and his identification of the conflict between the autonomy desired by performers and the actual organizational arrangements, are particularly relevant for our theory. Corwin suggested that, as the professional qualities of teachers increased, it would be more difficult for the school to function as a bureaucracy because of the burgeoning conflicts between professional ideologies and the actual evaluation and surveillance systems of the bureaucratic school organization.

Parsons (1947) discussed another facet of this conflict in schools. He identified an inherent bureaucratic conflict between authority based on expertise and that based on legal criteria. The conflict arises in the attempt to maintain professional discretion and collegial judgment even when these dictate action that is in opposition to standard operating procedures and to dependence on the judgment of superiors. To the extent that professional discretion holds sway, coordination becomes difficult. To the extent that legal authority is emphasized, the advantages of educational expertise, that is, of variable procedures in response to variable student demands, are lost. This type of conflict tends to alienate highly professional teachers from the school. Once again, the problem of the correct balance of autonomy and control for diverse tasks appears. Participants consider different balances of autonomy and control appropriate for various tasks performed. Some tasks are perceived to require greater autonomy, while others require more outside control and evaluation.

Sanctions

In order to cause a performer to change his behavior in a direction that does not coincide with his original preference, the performer may be sanctioned by his superior or clients or colleagues. Organizational sanctions are organizational rewards and penalties. Rewards, or positive sanctions, are given to those who exhibit approved behavior patterns; penalties, or negative sanctions, are given to those who reveal behavior patterns that are disapproved. For the organizational participant to be sanctioned by his superior, for example, the superior identifies the form of behavior as "approved" or "disapproved" and then gives the participant the appropriate positive sanction if the activity is approved or the appropriate negative sanction if the activity is disapproved.

Individuals often modify their behavior to increase the positive sanctions they receive or to decrease the negative ones. This change in behavior assumes that sanctions are important to the individual task performers and implies that the greater the importance of the reward or penalty to the participant, the greater potential the sanction has for modifying behavior. In some cases, despite attempts by superiors and

clients to avoid such a situation, no sanctions of importance to a given participant are controlled by the organizational evaluators. This is more often true for clients than for superiors.

Schools have often been criticized because their organizational structure lacks differential sanctions to reward or penalize behavior. It may be that within the alternative schools there are organizational arrangements which provide more influence of evaluations upon sanctions for task performers. It may also happen, however, that the evaluations in alternative schools will not control sanctions of importance and, consequently, will not change a performer's behavior.

DIMENSIONS OF TASK CONCEPTION

In our task-specific conception of organization, the conceptions that performers have concerning their tasks are of crucial importance. Task conception is the characteristic way in which the performer views his task. We are concerned with three dimensions of task conception: predictability, clarity, and efficacy (Magnani, 1970). These dimensions of the performer's task conception are related to the extent of knowledge that performers have about their tasks.

We define the three dimensions as follows: (a) predictability--the probability that the performer can predict which way of doing things is most likely to reach his goals; (b) efficacy--the overall probability that the task will be successfully completed; and (c) clarity--the extent to which the goals associated with a given task can be analytically specified.

Predictability is an index of one type of task knowledge. It is the knowledge of which alternative performance activities ought to be followed by the performer because they are most likely to yield successful task completion.

Efficacy is the perception by the performer of the overall probability that his activities will attain the goal associated with the task. Efficacy indicates the extent to which the performer knows how to successfully complete a particular task within a specific organizational environment.

Predictability and efficacy are probably positively correlated. But the presence of a high level of predictability does not necessarily imply a correspondingly high level of efficacy. The doctor who treats a cancerous patient experiences high predictability, but low efficacy. He may be able to predict which treatment has the highest probability of success, but his efficacy may, nevertheless, remain low since the percentage of successful cures is not high. The instance of low predictability and high efficacy is also theoretically possible, although unlikely, since few tasks involve this relationship. As an example, consider

the novice fisherman who brings home a large catch on his first expedition. The fisherman may perceive that his efficacy is high when he counts his fish, but knows that his predictability is low, i.e., he does not know the probability of success associated with each of the activities in which he engaged on his "lucky" day.

Clarity, the third dimension of task conception, concerns the extent of goal knowledge relating to a specific task. Clarity is low when there is a deficiency of goal knowledge.

The goal of task performance is a desired end state. When goal clarity is high, the specifications of this end state are precise, and when goal clarity is low, the specifications of the end state are imprecise. To illustrate this point, let us compare two teaching tasks: Record Keeping, such as turning in grades accurately and on time; and Character Development, such as helping the individual develop his full potential. One would expect that the goals of a teacher associated with the development of good character are both more difficult to specify and less precise than the specific goals associated with keeping a child's records. Thus, for the teacher involved, goal clarity for the task Record Keeping is said to be high; for Character Development, goal clarity is low.

Performance Evaluation

A performance evaluation is an evaluation of a person, since a performance, as the term will be used here, is never a mechanical set of activities unrelated to human action, but can always be attributed, at least in part, to an individual or a set of individuals. In addition, there are various sorts of performance evaluations. Some are absolutely formal and global in scope, arrived at by a duly constituted evaluator, and communicated officially to the performer. Others are informal and may involve only a cursory observation, glance, smile, or frown. Whenever a participant learns, directly or indirectly, how well or how poorly his evaluator thinks he is doing on an organizational task, he is receiving a performance evaluation.

The preceding statement combines two different activities: (a) the act of arriving at a performance evaluation, and (b) the act of communicating that evaluation to the performer. Since our theory focuses on the evaluation process as perceived by the teacher, we have considered only communicated evaluations--those which are known to teachers.

Although distinct components of the evaluation process may each be assigned separately to different evaluators, we have viewed them as dimensions of the total evaluation process for each task. This study involves professionals, and as Hind (1968) points out in a study of university faculty:

> professionals, whether independent or operating from within bureaucratic structures, are not usually subjected to the kinds of control implied by the separate authority rights. Rather, their performances are judged in a more global way, with emphasis on outcome (p. 59).

This study, like Hind's, will be concerned with gross evaluations of performers.

In many organizations, performance evaluations are tied directly to organizational sanctions, positive rewards or negative punishments. Those who exhibit high levels of successful task completion receive positive rewards or do not receive negative punishments. For our formulation, any evaluator who controls the organizational rewards or punishments for a performer will be regarded as <u>influential</u> in his evaluation. Evaluators who determine the flow of the most salient and fateful sanctions will be called "high in influence," and those who have a limited effect on the distribution of sanctions will be called "low in influence."

Other evaluators may control no sanctions relating to the performer's occupational position, but their evaluations nevertheless may be subjectively salient to the participant. Evaluators who are subjectively <u>important</u> to teachers often are not in a position to influence sanctions. Within a school, such an evaluator might be a respected peer who controls none of the organizational rewards and penalties, but who is highly important to members of the teaching staff because of his sound judgment and cogent, critical mind. He may be able to affect the task performance of those who hold his evaluations to be important, even though his power to alter performance has no organizational sanctions behind it.

From this, it can be seen that an important evaluator need not also be influential. When an evaluator is influential, however, he is likely to be important, since if an organizational evaluator controls rewards and penalties, this sanctioning power is likely to make his evaluations important to the performer. Therefore, although importance does not necessarily lead to influence, influence <u>does</u> lead to importance, and these two distinct variables are likely to be correlated.

Sometimes a performer is subject to the evaluation of more than one individual who has control over the organizational rewards and penalties related to his job. In this case, the fixed-sum properties of influential evaluation becomes clear. We believe that there can be only limited sanctions, both positive and negative, associated with any occupational position. Thus, as the influence of one evaluator or a group of evaluators increases, that of other evaluators or groups of evaluators will decrease by a corresponding amount. For example, if high school students gain seats on the committee that hires and fires teachers in their district, they will have increased their influence in this area of educational decision making. Simultaneously, the influence of other groups--parents, administrators, and teachers--will have correspondingly declined.

Importance in evaluation, on the other hand, does not seem to be a fixed sum. The evaluations of any number of individuals may be important to a performer, and as the importance of one individual's evaluation increases, the importance of the evaluation of others does not necessarily decrease.

Ultimately, the individual participant in any human interaction which involves a number of evaluators will decide which evaluators he can safely disregard, and which he ought to heed. This decision is not entirely an individual one, however. Performers in organizations find that the collectives which employ them attempt to guide their decisions on this matter. Most organizations specify that a certain group of participants will evaluate other participants. They then place organizational sanctions at the command of these participants to assure that their evaluations will be influential and thereby important.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ALTERNATIVE-SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Many educators have contributed to a revolution in the conception of the school, in the view of childhood, and in the image of what society through its schools should do for children (Cass, 1970). In part, the revolution developed from writings of observers such as John Holt, Herbert Kohl, Goerge Dennison, and Paul Goodman who described the authoritarianism pervading many classrooms, the suppression of the curiosity of the young, and the stress on grades and discipline at the expense of learning. The revolution also developed among parents and teachers who were repelled by the boredom, fear, and grievous lack of learning that too often accompany schooling (Stretch, 1970). Finally, the revolution developed among students who refused to submit to environments which they had once passively accepted. Thus, many intellectuals, parents, teachers, and students came to deride what they considered public education's pervasive emphasis on conformity rather than creativity, on discipline rather than independence, on defensive "put-down" rather than support, on orderliness rather than joy of discovery, on the neatness of administrative convenience rather than the often untidy environment of true learning. Concerned observers began to feel that children were being subjected to a custodial environment that denied the very nature of childhood and youth--an environment to which parents should not consciously submit any more willingly than their rebellious children should (Cass, 1970). In a manual prepared by one alternative school, a student provided his conception of alternative education:

> An alternative school is because the students, their parents, our staff, need new ways to life. Freedom, choice, flexibility, dissipated power, or shared power, life-learning, sensitivity learning, academic learning...woops...just being, card playing, dropping in and dropping out. An agreement or acceptance to recognize ourselves, our limits--to be open is really difficult, and impatience must be coped with so carefully. And when we're into something so new for each of

> us, the unorthodoxy becomes trying and impatience looms as a great destructive power--impatience with learning as a process of life (we live . . . we learn?). (New Directions Community School, n.d., p. 1.)

The outcome of this revolution was a new mood of questioning the public school system and of searching for alternatives. One major question was whether any institution that enjoys a virtual monopoly can remain sensitive and responsive to the changing needs of its diverse clientele. More radical critics questioned the traditional concept of schooling itself in an age when knowledge is accessible from so many different sources.

The results of this questioning process soon appeared. In the past five years, increasing numbers of parents, teachers, and students have struck out on their own to develop a new kind of school for a new kind of education--one that will nurture independent, courageous people able to deal with the shifting complexities of the modern world. The new schools have sprung up by hundreds across the country and go by these names as well as others: radical alternative schools, free schools, alternative schools, radical schools, or community schools. Their founders have developed a significant degree of self-awareness and a sense of community in what has come to be called the New Schools Movement. This movement, symbolized in California by the New Schools' Exchange in Santa Barbara, sponsors the continuous exchange of brochures and newsletters. It also organizes conferences at regular intervals (Stretch, 1970).

Philosophies and Goals

Here is what the founders of one school are attempting to accomplish.

> Our school in San Mateo has been in existence for one year. This year we had 12 students ranging in age from 10 to 14. The plan for September is 20 to 22 students, beginning with age 5. The school is based on the following premises.
>
> 1. There is an alternative to either authoritarianism or permissiveness, and that is participation. Rules, limits, standards established either by force or by default are "anti-learning." But when conflicts are resolved by meaningful and equal participation by child and adult, the very process of resolution becomes an integral part of the learning experience.
>
> 2. Learning proceeds from experience. Therefore the purpose of "school" is to be an environment which provides maximum opportunities for experiences that enrich--when learning proceeds from experience such as baking a loaf of bread, laying out a baseball field, or looking up the answer to a puzzling question in the encyclopedia, it is immediately relevant and real.

> 3. The only limit to learning is life itself; therefore limiting a learning environment to four walls is a contradictory and stultifying decision. The purpose of the school is to provide the child with access to his environment, to find exciting ways for the child to experience himself beyond the limits of classroom walls. (Feldman, 1970, p. 1.)

Alternative schools have a low tuition income; they are frequently held together by hope, hard work, commitment, and personality. They run mainly on the energy and excitement of people who have set out to "do their own thing." Their variety seems limitless; no two are alike. Radical schools range from inner city "liberation schools," designed to unite whites and minorities in their "struggle against oppression," through experiments in multi-cultural education, to rural utopian communities.

Our sample includes at least one school from each of these types. One school's purpose is highly political.

> The Movement needs information and training that cannot be provided from within traditional schools. Since the means for effective communication are expropriated from the intellectual worker, academics must start and support autonomous counter institutions that fully deny the priorities of capitalist education. Students and teachers have to create a practicing alternative education that does not use information as a commodity and the instrument of business and the State [Anon.]

Another school conveys its utopian commitment in this excerpt:

> Your children are the prophets of the millenium.
>
> [Our school] seeks to facilitate the creative expression of the magic of children. Why send your children to public school when they could be making FAIRY BREAD?
>
> "Come up here, O dusty feet!
> Here is fairy bread to eat.
> Here is my retiring room,
> Children, you may dine
> On the golden smell of broom
> And the shade of pine;
> And when you have eaten well
> Fairy stories hear and tell."
> [Children's Poem]
>
> [Our school] is a child's garden amidst the parking lots and monuments that we've built and called our world, a garden where your child explores the flowers of reading, French and film, social studies and silence, math and magic, drama and dance, sciences and circuses.

"Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's
longing for itself."
[Rivendell School Brochure, n.d., p. 1.]

Alternative schools turn up anywhere--in city store fronts, geodesic domes, old barns, abandoned church buildings, and teachers' homes. Some radical schools reject the confining walls of any single edifice and have no home base. The director of one such school wrote, "We are a very small band of children, teachers, and high school apprentices who meet throughout San Francisco like Gypsies, learning and growing."

Alternative schools have wild names like "Superschool," "Heliotrope." "GAFOO," "Mujji Ubu," and "Nittie Grittie Kittie Cittie"--names that for all their diversity identify institutions which often have two things in common: the idea of freedom for youngsters and the idea of a humane education (Stretch, 1970).

Freedom has many facets in the alternative school movement. In its own way, each school is free, individual, and without comparison. There exist hundreds of unique combinations of people, striking out in their own ways, at their own points in time and space. Each group has its own direction, goals, and hopes. George Dennison saw the freedom of alternative education as the basic difference between public and alternative schools.

> [Two] things about the First Street School were unusual: [first] our reversal of conventional structure, for where the public school conceives of itself merely as a place of instruction, and puts severe restraints on the relationships between persons, we conceived of ourselves as an environment for growth, and accepted the relationships between children and ourselves as being the very heart of the school; and [second], the kind of freedom experienced by teachers and pupils alike [Dennison, 1969, p. 4].

The only real common ground in the alternative-school movement is a dissatisfaction with public schools. Unfortunately, from this common opposition to traditional public education comes one of the greatest threats to the alternative-school movement. As Dewey commented in Experience and Education:

> There is always the problem in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively. Then it takes its clew in practice from that which is rejected instead of from the constructive development of its own philosophy [Dewey, 1938, p. 20].

In some senses, as we will point out below, it does seem that alternative schools are little more than reactions to a system considered odious and not a creation of a new approach to education. On the other hand, Dewey's

warning has been heeded by many in the movement. For example, the interchange of information and correspondence among members of the New Schools' Exchange is an attempt to build the members of the movement into forward-looking and creative educators whose main thrust is the formation of a new philosophy and set of new organizational arrangements for education, not merely a reaction against the institutional arrangements in public schools.

Reality versus Image

We must ask whether the image of the alternative school, as proclaimed in its ideology, corresponds to the reality of day to day life in alternative schools. The problem of school survival demonstrates the difference between the utopian image of the alternative school and its realization in 20th-century America. The mortality rate among radical schools is high; the average life span is estimated to be approximately 18 months (Stretch, 1970). Universally, lack of money is the primary cause of failure. Most schools are started by young people. The founders are rarely rich, and in order to act as viable alternatives for the common man--since the rich have alternatives--radical schools usually attempt to charge as little tuition as possible.

Our research indicated that tuition averaged less than $50 per month per student. It is difficult not only for schools to survive on the small tuition payments, but also for teachers to live on their wages. This is one cause for the high teacher turnover in many free schools. Teachers usually work for pitifully low salaries--$200 or less per month is common. Many respondents we contacted received only room and board. A recent study (Woulfe, 1970) reported on 18 alternative schools in the San Francisco Bay area. Of these schools, it was said that ten paid salaries that were "substantially less than those paid by public schools"; that six paid salaries "approximately equal to those of public schools"; and that only two schools paid higher salaries than public schools. Dismal as this sounds for the pocketbooks of alternative school teachers, the situation is probably much worse. One school which we visited pays its teachers a maximum of $400 per month. Some teachers get far less. This school was included in the category of schools that pay salaries which are "approximately equal" to those of public schools. Four hundred dollars is half of what a first-year teacher receives in the same area where that alternative school is situated. How do the teachers survive? Of the 100 respondents contacted during this study, most reported that they used food stamps and collected welfare. Comments like the following were typical: "I'm lucky about my landlord. He doesn't bug me too much. One time he even let me have a month's rent free." Other teachers receive room and board from their schools. Most of the alternative-school teachers rely on the government, benefactors, savings, and each other for moral support and financial help during particularly rough times. This kind of dedication is a great deal to expect from individuals over an extended period of time. Even those who prefer alternative life styles, living in communes, and subsisting on cheap foods find their poverty trying at times. On the other hand, they say, "What else can we do? The public schools are impossible." Although alternative schools appear

to supply many intrinsic rewards, the extrinsic rewards leave much to be desired. It is our opinion that poverty-stricken teachers make bad educators over the long run and that the romantic image is often far from the reality forced upon alternative-school teachers by their creditors.

POWER, AUTHORITY, AND EVALUATION IN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Power, authority, and evaluation are important and pervasive social phenomena which can be fruitfully studied in a variety of social settings. In this section, we will examine these three concepts in alternative schools.

We will first consider the ways in which the differential ability to manipulate sanctions of importance to others emerges in alternative schools. To do so, let us concentrate on the emergence of power differentiations in task groups. Previous studies, summarized in Evaluation and Authority (Dornbusch & Scott, forthcoming) describe the manner in which certain personal qualities or characteristics that differentiate among members become the basis for differential sanctioning ability. The process seems to be governed by a series of exchanges among group participants in which, over time, members both willing and able to make important contributions to goal attainment come to hold power over others less willing or able to do so.

A given member, A, furnishes assistance to another member, B, who, if he cannot reciprocate with equally valued services, can respond with his gratitude or praise. For a time this sort of exchange may be satisfactory to both parties: one value--assistance--is exchanged for another--thanks or praise. There are a number of reasons, however, why we would not expect such an exchange of values, if continued over time, to be satisfactory for A. The skills that enable A to assist others are comparatively rare, whereas gratitude or approval are less so. This means that B's contribution will be less highly valued than A's, and that A is likely to have a larger market for his contribution than will B. In addition, second, third, and fourth units of gratitude are less likely to be highly valued by A than second, third, and fourth units of assistance are valued by B. In short, over time, if A continues to provide assistance to B, B will become increasingly dependent on A. The basis of A's power becomes the dependency of B.

This process appears to be basic to the power relations in alternative schools. Although alternative-school teachers said that they want to "do away with value-laden terms like principal, parent, teacher and student," which define expectations in a task situation, they tended to replace formal organizational expectations with personal expectations based on commitments built up through interpersonal relationships.

Organizational Positions

Organizational positions within the alternative school often are not formally differentiated. "There are no 'students' and 'teachers' in this school," said one respondent. "We are all together. We work and learn and develop and grow together as one." Most respondents reported that their schools have no principal or other representatives of the formal organizational hierarchy common in public schools. Other respondents recognized no formalized positions at all. One individual responded vehemently, "We created this school to get away from principals without principles. We won't appoint a principal now for your questionnaire." Another respondent said, "I use the response category 'not applicable' for teacher and principal because I don't recognize those terms."

Few other organizations demonstrate this type of organizational arrangement, although the collegial character of some university faculties approximates it. Such a set of organizational arrangements is rarely found because of the need within organizations to regulate and control the behavior of participants in pursuit of specific goals. The creation of an organizational heirarchy is one of the most common mechanisms of this type. As a mechanism it is a power system in which positions are defined hierarchically with accompanying degrees of control over rewards and penalties thereby attempting to influence the behavior of those in subordinate positions. Such a system is characteristic of very few alternative schools.

Alternative-school teachers rarely demonstrated any acceptance of positional definitions for participants. Anyone could be a teacher or a learner. Most participants were both, simultaneously. Teachers often had little or no formal training; our sample included one teacher who was fifteen years old. An individual's employment within the organization depended upon his ability to convince other staff and students that he had something worthwhile to offer the community and that he was open and willing to learn from other participants. Employment rarely had anything to do with the amount of training an individual had undergone. In fact, those who were able to "stick it out" within the university system, especially those with advanced degrees in education or teaching credentials, are regarded with suspicion. Thus, anyone could be a prospective teacher and learner.

Concept of Power

No organizational position in alternative schools is clearly connected with access to organizational rewards and penalties. Initial access to sanctions must be earned through the exchange process or in other ways, and once the participant gains such power, he must continue to earn it. In addition, the community and its overall sanctioning power stand as a counterweight to the differential sanctioning power that any single person is able to control. No matter how powerful an individual becomes, he will generally be unable to work his will on the larger group.

Formal authority systems are more stable than informal power systems, such as those found in alternative schools. Because formal authority is associated with relationships between positions in a formal organization, rather than with relations between specific persons, it tends to persist in spite of the comings and goings of particular occupants. Interpersonal power, as is seen in the free school, is wedded to relationships among specific occupants and is unlikely to survive changes in participants. This is one main reason for the short 18-month life of the average alternative school. A common fear expressed by both staff and students was, "What about next year?" They knew they wanted to be together, but they feared that interpersonal rivalries and conflicts would destroy their schools. They saw charismatic leadership, based on the possession of rare and highly valued personal attributes by only one or two individuals in the school, as a major cause of this instability. Only in schools which had passed beyond the charismatic stage, to a position where the organization functioned as a whole community, did participants feel secure in the school's future. With the entire group bound together, and community as a guiding force, a reasonable number of individuals could continually depart from and enter the community without causing a dissolution of the school.

Although a formal power structure might seem beneficial in that it frees the organization to some degree from the necessity of finding natural leaders to fill its leadership positions, few alternative school participants were ready to set one up. Having created anti-organizations, they strenuously objected to formal organizational sanctions. Power was not to be provided, gratis, as an integral part of a position within the organizational hierarchy; it was to be continually earned. Thus, radical-school participants were especially aware of problems of power and its legitimate uses. This led us to a concept of authority, which we have defined as authorized or endorsed power.

Authority Relationships

We have applied two sets of distinctions to the study of authority relations in order to see the difficulties inherent in authority relations in organizations like alternative schools. In the first set of distinctions, a subordinate may believe certain norms governing power relations to be valid in the sense that he acknowledges that these norms do exist; or the subordinate may believe certain norms governing power relations to be proper in the sense that he believes these norms are as they should be. A subordinate may view norms governing power relationships as valid but not proper, or as proper but not valid, or as both proper and valid.

The second set of distinctions refers to the source of norms supporting the power relation. Power may be authorized by norms enforced by persons superior to the power wielder; or it may be endorsed by norms enforced by colleagues of the subordinate. Power becomes authority when it is authorized or when it is endorsed, or both; but either persons superior to the power wielder or persons subordinate to him must initiate

and enforce some norms regulating the exercise of power if we are to speak of authority.

The alternative school illustrates both variety and complexity in these possible authority relationships. It provides a situation where only endorsed authority is likely to exist. Initially, one must limit the definition of superior and subordinate in alternative schools. Rarely are there formal hierarchical positions within free schools. Subordinates or superiors exist only in the sense that some people in alternative schools take more advice than they give, and others give more advice than they take.

Turning to the distinction mentioned above, alternative-school participants accepted norms governing power relations as valid but not proper. A number of radical-school teachers made comments like "The community is the most powerful force in our school--that's just the way it is. No one can do anything about it." Such remarks indicated an acceptance of the power norms as valid. Few participants saw the norms governing power relations as proper, acknowledging that they were as they should be. At best, they accepted them reluctantly as an unpleasant fact of life, like this respondent: "Most of the time we think individuals are giving up too much to the group as a whole--that the community is selfish and takes too much away from us." Thus, radical educators are apt to see the norms governing power relations as valid but not proper.

In addition, few alternative-school teachers perceived power as authorized by norms supported by superiors. In general, there are few superiors since these schools were often created specifically to escape hierarchical authority structures.

Most alternative-school participants did acknowledge, however, that power relationships are endorsed by norms of the community or by colleagues. Usually, students were within the endorsing group. Only in a few alternative schools did participants refuse to allow any individual or group to hold endorsed power over their activities. Thus, although the individual did not accept or approve as proper the way in which power is exercised over him, he did acknowledge the validity of the forms enforced by his community. In this sense, he was usually willing to subordinate himself to the social constraints of the group and accept the authority of the community.

Clearly, a conflict exists here for the alternative-school teacher. On one hand, the teacher is vividly aware of his individuality in the task he performs, and of the organizational arrangements he perceives to be appropriate for the performance of this task. He perceives the tasks of education to be highly complex, requiring high autonomy. The free teacher feels the need for high autonomy and freedom in his personal life, and the character of the alternative school often mixes, inextricably, school and personal life. On the other hand, the radical-school teacher is also well aware of the tryanny that the unrestrained individual--either teacher of student--can enforce on a small informal group like the radical school.

In most cases, at least for a while, he subordinates his own individual goals to those of the community in order to obtain institutional stability. That the free teacher does not often do this for long is evidenced by the short life of most free schools.

We have described the manner in which differential levels of influence can emerge in informal groups like alternative schools as a consequence of exchange processes occurring between individual participants. We have also noted that an authority system of endorsed power is common. Further, it should be pointed out that status processes are at work and that they have an important part to play in transforming power into authority. Exchanges go on between actors A and B. To the extent that B comes to recognize the greater value of the goods and services offered to him by A in comparison with what he has to offer in return, B will become increasingly obligated to A for the assistance rendered. Such differential social obligations constitute the basis for differential status; for B comes to recognize and acknowledge A's superiority, and his own inferiority, in the situation.

In general, an individual will be more willing to follow the advice of, or be subject to the control of, a person whom he regards as superior to him in a given situation. He is likely to regard as appropriate the superior individual's attempt to control him. In this manner, status differences may serve to legitimize what differences exist in the distribution and exercise of power among participants in alternative schools. This statement must be qualified, however, by pointing out that the power that a single individual or even a group desires to exercise over other members of the community is usually quite limited. This was true for both students and teachers. For example, one student commented, "The teachers are free, just like the kids are. If they fuck up or like that, it's their problem, not ours. People may tell them where they're going. They'll suggest something, but well, like, it's they that did it, and they've got the problem to solve, really." One teacher went even further: "It's not a matter of judging. We support each other--that's what we all need." People are jealous of their spheres of influence. We just don't come down on each other to change things. It's not worth it."

If power is wielded by an individual or group in a free school, and legitimated into authority by status processes, it cannot be applied in a heavy-handed manner. Legitimization is easily and quickly withdrawn. No matter how heinous the offender's crime, if he has any justification for claiming that his personal rights are being violated through the "unfair" use of power, sanctions are unlikely to be applied. After all, alternative schools often begin as a reaction against power systems in which differential application of sanctions was perceived by participants to be arbitrary. Alternative-school teachers and students are willing to err, but only on the side of leniency, seldom on the side of arbitrariness.

It is also possible that power relations may develop into authority structures when the power wielder acts in such a way that compliance with his demands becomes rewarding to subordinates. But in alternative schools it is not always possible for one participant to exercise authority over another and at the same time provide rewards to him. One of the alternative schools included in our study was still in the process of formation. At our first visit, power and status differences had not yet clearly developed. In the course of subsequent visits, we had the opportunity to observe their formation. Although at least three of the male teachers clearly desired power, two of the three also wanted to maintain group approval. The desire for both personal and power and social approval placed conflicting demands on these three individuals, especially since they initially perceived themselves to be equals. Two of the three teachers chose to make contributions to goal attainment. They made suggestions, evaluated the contributions of others, and attempted to control and mobilize participants to work on task solutions through their own good examples. They were extremely careful not to seem coercive, and made it clear that they sensed it was often not particularly gratifying for others to feel that they were dependent upon them for help or for performance evaluation.

In contrast, the other teacher directed his energies toward "leading" the group toward a better educational environment. He appeared to think of himself as principal of the school. Over the two and one-half months during which occasional visits were made, the gradual mobilization of endorsed power around the two goal-oriented individuals became more and more clear. Simultaneously, the "principal" lost favor and left the school. "He may come back," someone said. We sensed, however, that no one cared whether or not he would return. As a power-oriented individual he had attempted to exercise unendorsed authority over the group. The interpersonal relationships and organizational structure of free education had made it impossible for him to gain personal power and also to make compliance with his demands rewarding to potential subordinates.

These observations suggest that power is not easily transformed into authority in alternative schools, and that, when it is not, special structural arrangements may be necessary to prevent the group from being torn by struggles for status and power. Only when there is a mobilization of social norms among group members in support of a particular distribution of power does it become possible for leaders to lead, and followers to follow, without generating disruptive emotional responses. Such endorsed norms foster the development of stable expectations concerning the roles participants are to play in the group structure. Since the norms distribute responsibility for surveillance among all group members, the control system operates effectively even when superiors are absent, and sometimes when there are no superiors, as in most alternative schools. From this perspective, authority, in contrast to non-legitimate or illegitimate power, may provide the basis for a more stable and effective control system, although this is rarely achieved in most alternative schools.

Community Government

Despite this seeming leadership vacuum, participants in alternative schools have developed organizational arrangements with which to channel their activities into goal-directed activities. One special structural arrangement found often in alternative schools to provide direction is the "all-school meeting." Through this approach to school government, all community concerns are brought up for action by the entire school. Within the all-school meeting, it is common to find a rotating chairmanship. This makes it unnecessary for the community to endorse power for any single individual. The position is a precarious one, however. During one such meeting, a number of those present complained that the chairman was infringing upon the rights of a member of the school group. The chairman's reply was typical of other responses. "Shit!, I don't want it." (The job of chairman.) "Give it to someone else. It's your fault. You put me here." He then resigned; a new chairman was selected, and the meeting continued. The chairman saw no reason to remain in office if the school felt he had made illegitimate use of his power.

Within the all-school meeting, it is everyone's obligation to bring up problems that face the community as a whole. Concerns are usually raised initially in impersonal terms. For example, "Some people haven't done their dish washing for the last two turns. I saw them playing volley ball instead, and I don't like doing their work." At this point, a member of the community may ask exactly who was involved. The offender then has a chance to justify his action. If he can convince the group that the activity which he substituted for his assigned task was more valuable, the issue is likely to be dropped. If it becomes clear that the offender was shirking, action is taken to remedy the situation.

The offender is usually accorded a liberal amount of leeway. If his justification seems plausible, the community is likely to let him off, especially if it is a first or second offense. Teachers and students in the all-school meeting take power seriously and are overcautious about abusing it. They have left the "straight" educational system, or refuse to enter it, because they object to having power exercised over them. It is reasonable to expect them to be circumspect in the application of any sanctions they control.

It often takes a great deal of courage to bring up a complaint against an individual or group in an all-school meeting. Since both offender and accuser may be subject to group sanctions, the accuser must be sure of his ground. At one school a boy complained that someone had taken an article of clothing from him without permission. As the discussion continued, it became clear that the offender had asked to borrow the clothing and had not been allowed to do so. It was brought out that not only did the accuser have more than enough clothing to satisfy his needs, but also that he was unusually selfish with his belongings. By the time the discussion concluded, the accuser had earned the censure of the entire community, even though the offender had admitted his crime and had agreed to return the article. Here we see the reluctance of free educators and students to use the power they have, and the interesting manner in which power is applied when it is used.

Incidents like the one mentioned above may be destructive to the community. Offenders will often refuse to discuss the legitimate complaints of accusers on a one-to-one basis, saying "If you really care about this, bring it up at a school meeting." This puts the offender and accuser on even ground before their peers. It may even give an advantage to the accused since he knows the community will probably err, if it does, in his favor. In addition, an accuser who is unsure whether his accusation is justified, is loath to raise an issue that may earn him the censure of the community. Thus, although the all-school meeting does provide some direction for behavior, the direction provided is far from complete.

KEY CONCEPTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Organizational Goals

We will now discuss a number of concepts and relationships that are particularly important to our theory of evaluation and authority and to an understanding of alternative schools. The first consideration is the concept "organizational goal." Vague and general descriptions of an organization's goals may suffice for interorganizational analysis, but they are less satisfactory for investigations focused on the specific effects of certain goals. For example, the goal of a particular alternative school might be "to provide an optimum learning environment for children." This general description of a goal could only serve as a point of departure for the analyst interested in the effects of goals on the day-to-day activities of alternative-school participants.

It is very difficult to specify the goals of free educators with any precision. Participants often object to precise definitions, since they feel that such precision will only limit their activities. One respondent commented, "I don't even have goals. I just come here. I do what seems right at the time." Thus, although our data show that even within alternative schools some participants orient their behavior in terms of quite general goals, and that others are guided by much more specific and limited objectives, few respondents are either willing or able analytically to specify their goals. This reluctance does little to help our understanding of goal-oriented behavior within alternative schools.

The conception of a desired end state can vary enormously in clarity and precision. It can be both highly general and highly specific. Most alternative-school teachers are self-consciously vague about their goals. When questionned closely on the concept of goal, some teachers became defensive and vowed that they could neither identify the specific state they wished to obtain nor the particular performance activities designed to attain this state. Others evaded the question completely or accused the investigator of trying to put them in the "public school bag" by asking about their goals in such a precise manner. One respondent said, "We don't set up goals on purpose. We try to break them down, they are too constricting. We deal with the changing realities of our own and others' lives. The more we make up goals, the more we are creating categories

and filling them with people. We must start with people and move from there."

Only in schools which perceived themselves to be part of "the movement" were respondents willing or able to express clarity of goals. There seemed to be a high positive correlation between the revolutionary orientation of alternative schools and the perceived goal clarity of participants. As the schools became more political, teachers and students became more adept at identifying the desired characteristics of a graduating student and the particular performance activities that were likely to develop these traits.

Goal-Related Tasks

Earlier, we defined task as any activity or set of activities carried out by a person or persons to attain a goal. An organizational task was defined as a set of activities carried out to attain an organizational goal. What sort of activities are regarded as tasks in alternative schools? Dornbusch and Scott (forthcoming) note that "activities carried out for their own sakes are not . . . regarded as tasks--they are not work, but play." This definition did not apply in alternative schools we sampled. Most free school teachers and students refused to perform tasks which they did not perceive to be intrinsically important. For example, a large number of alternative schools kept no records because they felt records hampered learning and were not important for the education of children. Students needing transcripts when they transferred to another school would simply sit down with their teachers to write out the grades or comments which they thought the new institution wanted. On the other hand, in a minority of schools where it was believed that children ought to be aware of the changes that they had undergone, or where school officials felt that the child would need bona fide records when he left the school, records were diligently kept. Thus, if the task of record keeping is seen as important, it is performed diligently, even though the performance activities are dull and repetitious. When record keeping is not perceived as intrinsically important, it is rarely carried out.

The definition of task, for our study, must be changed to include activities which are perceived to be intrinsically important and carried out for their own sake, as well as those which are performed in response to sanctions manipulated by other organizational participants. Once a general goal has been selected, and the performer has accepted the organizational goal as his own, someone must determine how the task is to be carried out. An actor who makes generally non-trivial decisions regarding the performance of a task which has been allocated to him has received a delegation. These activities may involve decision making and implementation activities. In contrast, an actor who receives a directive has had most of the decisions and implementation procedures of the task decided for him. Most alternative-school tasks are performed as delegations. In addition, many alternative-school tasks are not allocated to performers in any formal manner at all, but fall to particular participants by chance or default. This is not common in most organizations.

In general, two types of tasks may be distinguished. An inert task is one performed against a relatively predictable resistance: turning a light switch. An active task is one performed in the face of relatively unpredictable resistance: teaching a child to read. Whether a task is inert or active usually has important implications for the persons allocating the task. One would expect inert tasks to be allocated by directive, and active tasks to be allocated by delegation. This is because inert tasks lend themselves to the development of standardized and routinized performance activities. Active tasks, however, cannot be easily routinized and, therefore, are usually allocated by delegation to skilled participants because of the complexity of their performance activities.

Both active and inert tasks are performed in alternative schools. Unlike most organizations, however, in which only active tasks are routinely allocated by delegation to performers, free schools are characterized by a situation in which almost all tasks are allocated to participants by delegation, regardless of their complexity. In addition, many tasks--both inert and active--are left unallocated. They are simply performed because they "clearly need to be done."

This set of organizational arrangements is not irrational within the total context of alternative education. Even though some respondents expressed the understanding that record keeping and other inert tasks were best performed by standard operating procedures, the cast majority of the alternative-school teachers stated that they expected to have as much freedom in the performance of inert tasks as they expected to have with active tasks. It is not that they did not understand the concept involved; they simply did not wish to have another individual control their activities, especially when the control might have exercised over a dull, repetitious task like record keeping.

Often in alternative schools, the freedom characteristic of tasks allocated by delegation was stretched to mean the freedom not to perform tasks at all. When tasks were allocated by delegation to participants, those tasks perceived to be of most importance and interest to participants were generally performed first. Other tasks, perceived to be of less importance, were left for later performance. Those perceived least important were rarely performed at all.

The knowledge that a task exists and "needs to be performed" does not guarantee that it will be performed. This is recognized in alternative schools, and the result is that many tasks are not performed, even when they "ought" to be. In most organizations such laxity is unacceptable, and measures are taken to motivate participants to pursue goals. The usual organizational solution to such a problem is the creation of a power structure in which positive sanctions are applied to those who perform the tasks assigned to them, and negative sanctions are applied to those who do not perform their duties. The use of sanctions to motivate participants was not as common in alternative schools as it was in other organizations. One of the major complaints of teachers and students in alternative schools was that "People just don't do their part. There are lots of things that have to be done here. But nobody does them!" Even a majority vote

in an all-school meeting may not be enough to produce needed action. When 51 percent of the group decides that a task ought to be performed, that 51 percent is generally left with the job of performing the task. The other 49 percent do nothing. Generally, group consensus seems the only way to get action, but total agreement and an accompanying commitment to task performance are difficult to obtain.

Sanctions

Even when sanctions are applied in alternative schools, the ability to reward and punish a task performer does not inevitably confer control over the performer's behavior. In order to speak of power as the basis for a control system, one must link sanctioning behavior to the behavior of the recipient of sanctions, as sanctions are selectively employed to reward and punish certain types of behavior. This is difficult in an organization which has as few rewards and punishments as the typical alternative school. It is even more difficult when organizational participants claim that what organizational rewards and penalties the school does offer are only mildly important to them.

The only significantly important sanction is expulsion from the organization and even that was not especially potent. As one respondent put it, "If I leave, I leave. My activities have a relation to whether I stay in this school or not, but if I leave it is probably going to be my decision." He could hardly admit that the organization controlled the power to retain or fire him. Another teacher commented, "No one would really force you to leave the school. It would just be time to go and you would know it, and everyone else would, too. Then you would leave and do something else. It's no problem."

Other sanctions, including salary, were of little importance to participants. One reason for this, in addition to the fact that salaries were abysmally low, was that rewards were generally distributed less with regard to the performance of participants than according to need. This made it practically impossible for alternative schools to use differential rewards to socialize participants and teach them which behaviors are desired by the organization.

The only real means of controlling participant behavior, besides providing tasks which are intrinsically important, seemed to be initial screening process. In most schools, the prospective student or staff member must be acceptable to every member of the community. Often a single negative vote was enough to bar an individual from membership. This system served to assure, at least partially, that incoming participants were committed to the same goals as the school community, but it did not serve as a means to control performance once the individual had been accepted in the organization. Thus, the differential application of organizational sanctions appears to function to only a limited extent as a means to control participant performance.

On the other hand, the evaluations of individual organizational participants and clients were often important to performers in alternative schools. It was our supposition that the evaluations of important or subjectively salient individuals were more likely to affect the behavior of alternative-school teachers than was the selective use of organizational rewards and penalties.

Important Evaluations

Three factors cause selected individuals to be important evaluators in alternative schools. First, the high commitment of participants to the goals of the organization induces them to esteem evaluations if they perceive that these evaluations will lead to increments in successful task performance. For example, alternative-school participants are likely to see the evaluations of students and of other teachers as important. When asked to explain why he felt this way, one teacher commented, "Who knows best when things are going wrong? Simple. I ask the boy or girl. Or he tells me without asking. He evaluates me with his body. He doesn't come to class." Another teacher commented on the importance of a colleague, saying, "He knows what's happening. He's here all day long and so am I. Who else would I ask? Who else would I listen to?"

In short, high commitment to goals causes participants to regard as important the evaluations of those seen as competent or knowledgeable with respect to these goals, even when these other persons have little or no effect on the distribution of organizational sanctions.

A second basis for the importance of evaluators who have no control over organizational sanctions is that these evaluators help determine the acceptability and relative status of a person in the eyes of his fellow workers. Esteem need not be correlated here with teaching competence or even with the performance of teaching tasks. We were told that, in some alternative schools, individuals who had never taught classes could, through their evaluations, have a profound effect on the performance of teachers. They were seen as important evaluators because they were "together." They knew themselves, their relation to the world in which they lived, and were adept at helping others work out these relationships for themselves. Thus, to the extent that a participant was concerned about his informal standing in a peer group, the evaluations made of him by certain individuals were important to him.

Third, and finally, some evaluations are regarded as important because of their relevance for the performer's self-concept. The evaluation process is clearly fundamental to the maintenance of an individual's self-concept. Attachments of all kinds, between teacher and student and between groups of teachers, were commonly found in the alternative schools. Participants who viewed others as salient reference persons or groups regarded their evaluations as important regardless of their lack of association with organizational sanctions. Evaluation of this sort is probably the most important of the three categories mentioned.

One final point is appropriate here. It was mentioned earlier that evaluators who are influential are likely to be important as well; but that evaluators who are important are not necessarily influential. We also noted that most participants in alternative schools, paid little heed to the few organizational rewards and penalties controlled by their schools, and relied on important individuals for outside evaluation of their performance. These teachers pointed out repeatedly that those who are important as evaluators ought to be influential as well and that those who are subjectively salient ought to have power over the organization's rewards and penalties. Thus, it may be that within alternative schools, because most participants do not perceive organizational rewards and penalties to be important, influence in evaluation does not lead to importance, as in most organizations, but rather, importance in evaluation leads to influence.

In concluding this section it must be observed that an examination of alternative schools provides insight into a type of organization atypical in 20th-century America. The alternative school is a collective that is, by definition, personal and transient. It is unstabilized for formalization. Behavior is controlled by the common goal-orientation of participants, while the use of organizational sanctions to manipulate participant behavior is uncommon. Certainly, the usual formalization of most large and small organizations provides a great increment in efficiency, but the loss of personal commitment to the organizational goals and tasks is a result of this formalization process.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

An integral part of our research was a 26-page questionnaire administered to 200 respondents: 100 elementary and secondary school teachers from five public schools in two northern California school districts and 100 elementary and secondary school teachers from 24 San Francisco Bay area alternative schools. The task of data collection was approached differently in the two types of schools.

For the public school sample the introduction and instructions stressed the anonymity of the responses and the hope that the results of the study would lead to improvements in the organization of schools. Contact with respondents was made through administrative personnel who set up gatherings at which about 15 questionnaires were administered at one time. Alternative-school teachers were approached on a more personal level. It was usually necessary to convince each individual respondent that it would be worthwhile to aid the authors' research. No contacts were made with alternative schools through administrative personnel.

Both public school and alternative-school teachers were assured that they would receive a full report of the results of the study. Despite obvious differences between teachers, both groups agreed that nothing was likely to come from the investigation, and that the study was probably a waste of time.

For the public school sample a member of our research team was always present to distribute questionnaires, answer questions, and observe teachers as they responded. Although the student bodies of the public schools were relatively heterogeneous, no systematic attempt was made to insure that the teachers or students in the specific schools had any particular characteristics.

Most of the data in the alternative-school sample were collected personally by the senior author. It was generally necessary to make from two to five visits to each alternative school, initially to establish rapport, and subsequently to obtain a reasonable number of respondents from each, since few alternative schools provided more than four respondents for the study.

Since alternative-school educators were usually unwilling or unable to meet together in a staff room, data were generally collected from a few willing respondents at a time. Although this led to numerous interruptions, greatly increasing the time needed to build the required sample, it allowed us to observe at close hand the workings of a large number of alternative schools.

Respondents in public schools usually needed approximately 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Many finished in a shorter time. Alternative-school respondents generally took much longer; in fact, few finished in less than one hour, and some took two hours or more. There were many reasons for this. The usual pattern of alternative-school interaction is one. As an example, a student with a problem or question felt free to consult the teacher even though he was busy with "some stupid test or questionnaire." In addition, there were usually no private offices or staff rooms for business meetings. Questionnaires were filled out in the middle of traffic; in a wood shop, in a chemistry laboratory, in the teacher's home, or even on the grass or on the floor. In many cases the administration of the questionnaires took place in full view of other participants in the school.

Another basis for the extended length of time taken by alternative-school teachers for responding was the fact that they generally took more care in answering than did their public school counterparts. Although it was typical for alternative-school teachers to comment "This test is a bunch of bullshit!," once committed to helping in this project, all but two alternative-school teachers completed the questionnaire.

Alternative-school teachers wrote many more comments in the margins and on the backs of questionnaires than did teachers in public schools. This, too, took up a great deal of time. Many alternative-school respondents agonized for five or ten minutes over a single question. Despite the fact that no public school teachers participated in the study involuntarily, it was obvious that they regarded the time spent on the research as part of their job which they could not gracefully avoid, and to which they had better resign themselves.

Alternative-school teachers also took more time because they found it hard to submit to the rigorous categorization found in the instrument, saying that it was either impossible or a distortion of reality to divide their lives and school activities into neatly defined response categories.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA: A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS IN ALTERNATIVE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In the general, impressionistic, global method of presentation employed so far in this report, we have avoided reporting specific relationships between variables. We have, however, based our comments on what we have perceived to be characteristic qualities in alternative and public schools. In the results of our study below we will attempt to test some of these general impressions.

The Tasks of the Teacher

We focused our investigation on four teaching tasks: Teaching Subject Matter, Character Development, Maintaining Control, and Record Keeping. These tasks were selected for two reasons. First, they appeared to represent the major tasks performed by teachers. Second, teachers reported that the four tasks were important in their daily work and that their performance on each task was likely to be evaluated. Of the four tasks, Character Development was ranked as the most important. Teaching Subject Matter ranked second; Maintaining Control, third; and Record Keeping, fourth. Table 1 shows the median importance for the tasks investigated.

TABLE 1

Median Values for the Importance of Four Teaching Tasks

Task	Public School	Alternative School	Rank in Importance
Teaching Subject Matter	1.4	2.1	2nd
Character Development	1.2	1.1	1st
Maintaining Control	1.9	2.9	3rd
Record Keeping	3.0	4.1	4th

Scale: (1) Extremely Important, (2) Very Important, (3) Moderately Important, (4) Slightly Important, (5) Not At All Important.

In Table 1 we can see the extreme difference in the relative importance of the tasks. For example, there is a major difference for Record Keeping in public and alternative schools, the median values of importance being 3.0 and 4.1, respectively. In public schools, 70 percent of the respondents perceived Record Keeping to be Moderately, Very, or Extremely Important, whereas in alternative schools only 24 percent of the respondents gave this much importance to it. There are lesser differences for two of the three other tasks. Only for Character Development are the medians similar: 92 and 95 percent, in alternative and public schools, respectively, believed that Character Development was Very or Extremely Important.

Just as in Record Keeping, alternative-school teachers thought the remaining two tasks were less important. For Teaching Subject Matter, 61 percent of the alternative-school teachers and 89 percent of the public school teachers perceived that the task was Very or Extremely Important. For Maintaining Control, 36 percent of the alternative-school sample compared to 75 percent of the public school sample felt Maintaining Control was Very or Extremely Important.

Character Development ranked first in importance and was of relatively equal importance for both public and alternative-school respondents. For public school respondents, Teaching Subject Matter and Maintaining Control ranked next and were of approximately equal importance, although Teaching Subject Matter was slightly more Important. For alternative-school respondents, however, the relative importance of Teaching Subject Matter was much lower than the importance of the same task in public schools. In addition, the relative importance accorded to Maintaining Control in alternative schools was far below that for teaching Subject Matter, and the same pattern was observed for Record Keeping. Thus, although the order of importance was the same for the four tasks in both samples, the relative importance of tasks within this rank order was quite dissimilar.

The rewards and penalties in public and alternative schools were differentially related to the four tasks studied. Table 2 shows the median influence upon organizational rewards and penalties for each task. Note that a lower median value signifies that a specific task has more influence on the distribution of organizational sanctions.

TABLE 2

Median Values of Influence on the Distribution of Organizational Sanctions, by Task

Task	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	2.3	3.1
Character Development	2.9	2.5
Maintaining Control	2.8	3.3
Record Keeping	3.7	4.7

Scale: (1) Extremely Important, (2) Very Important, (3) Moderately Important, (4) Slightly Important, (5) Not At All Important.

Table 2 shows that for alternative schools the task of Character Development is most influential in the distribution of organizational rewards and penalties. Teaching Subject Matter is second, followed by Maintaining Control and Record Keeping. This order corresponds to the ranking of task importance for both alternative and public educators. Table 2 also shows that Record Keeping is of much less importance in the relative distribution of organizational rewards and penalties in alternative schools than in public schools. Eighty-three percent of the alternative-school respondents stated that Record Keeping is Slightly or Not at All Influential in the distribution of organizational sanctions, whereas only 52 percent of the public school sample felt this way.

In public schools however, the order of importance for tasks differed from the actual influence these tasks had on the distribution of organizational rewards and penalties. Teaching Subject Matter was identified as having most influence in the distribution of organizational sanctions. Next came Maintaining Control, Character Development, and then Record Keeping.

Further examination of Table 2 reveals that for all tasks but Character Development the median value of importance is higher for the alternative-school sample than for the public school sample. This demonstrates that all tasks but Character Development are relatively less influential in the distribution of organizational sanctions to alternative-school participants than they are to public school teachers. Only Character Development, with the median value of 2.5 is of higher influence for alternative-school respondents than for public school teachers.

This reveals an interesting discrepancy. Tasks perceived to be most important for alternative-school educators were also seen as most influential in the distribution of organizational sanctions. In public schools, however, the rank order of task importance did not perfectly correspond to the order of task influence in the distribution or organizational rewards and penalties, since Character Development was given lower influence in public schools than in alternative schools.

Clarity, Predictability, and Efficacy in Task Conception

Not only did teachers in alternative and public schools perceive different levels of importance for their tasks, they also had different conceptions of what the tasks were. We used three dimensions of task conception: clarity, predictability, and efficacy to differentiate the perceptions performers had of their tasks.

Teachers in public schools felt much more able to specify their goals analytically than did alternative-school teachers. Only 8 percent of the public school teachers perceived their goals to be Extremely, Very, or Moderately Vague for Teaching Subject Matter; 18 percent perceived this extent of goal clarity for Character Development; and 11 percent for Maintaining Control. Alternative-school respondents expressed much more vagueness about their goals. Goals were seen as Extremely, Very, or Moderately Vague for 50 percent in Teaching Subject Matter, 47 percent in Character Development, and 51 percent in Maintaining Control. Thus, there were very marked differences in the perceptions of the teacher's own goals, with teachers in alternative schools claiming much less clarity in their goals.

Perceptions about goal clarity for Record Keeping were much more similar for both samples. This is as one might expect, since goals for inert tasks like Record Keeping appear to all to be easier to specify analytically. Only 28 percent of the alternative-school sample and 17 percent of those in public schools felt that their goals for Record Keeping were Extremely, Very, or Moderately Vague. Yet even here, teachers in alternative schools perceived their goals as more vague than did teachers in public schools.

In addition to perceiving more goal clarity than alternative-school teachers, public school teachers also perceived that they were more efficacious in their performance than were teachers in alternative schools. Seventy-four percent of the public school sample felt they were Usually or More Often Successful in Teaching Subject Matter, 61 percent for Character Development, and 82 percent perceived that they were Usually or More Often Successful at Maintaining Control. On the other hand, only 43, 52, and 56 percent of the alternative-school teachers felt themselves to be Usually or More Often Successful for Teaching Subject Matter, Character Development, and Maintaining Control, respectively.

Once again, the more inert task, Record Keeping, was characterized by more balanced perceptions of success within the two samples. Sixty-seven percent of the alternative-school sample, and 95 percent of those in public schools, perceived themselves to be Usually or More Often Successful for this task. Thus, for every task, teachers in public schools believed they were more successful than did teachers in alternative schools.

Teachers in public schools also perceived themselves as more able than alternative-school teachers to predict effective performance methods. For Teaching Subject Matter, Character Development, and Maintaining Control, respectively, 73, 58, and 79 percent of the public school teachers believed they were Usually or More Often able to predict which method of task performance was most likely to reach their goals. For alternative-school teachers, only 41, 43, and 48 percent, respectively, felt they could make a similar prediction. For Record Keeping, 74 percent of the alternative-school respondents and 82 percent of those from public schools perceived that they were Usually or More Often able to predict the best performance methods.

Thus, public school teachers exhibited a much higher general level of confidence about their task performance than did alternative-school respondents. They felt that they were more clear in their goals, more able to predict the best performance methods to reach their goals, and more successful. One might speculate that the perception of high levels of clarity, predictability, and efficacy in the public school sample is quite out of proportion to the seeming complexities of the educational process. Is it possible that the perceptions of high clarity, predictability, and efficacy are defensive reactions which public school teachers use against the numerous attacks made on themselves and their organizations?

From these higher perceptions of clarity, predictability, and efficacy in the public school sample, we would expect those respondents to desire less task performance autonomy than their alternative-school counterparts. This expectation is based on our belief that those who perceive less clarity, predictability, and efficacy want more freedom to experiment and use individual insights in their day to day task performance. Also, assuming there is some relationship between the task conception held by organizational participants and the actual organizational arrangements exhibited by organizations, we expected public school organizations to show less actual autonomy for participants.

Actual and Preferred Autonomy

Both groups of respondents reported that they had and should have high levels of autonomy in task performance. Even at this high level, however, there were differences in actual and preferred levels of autonomy. In all cases, alternative-school teachers reported themselves to have and to want higher autonomy levels than public school teachers.

Alternative-school teachers reported that they were Never Told What To Do much more frequently than did public school teachers. For Teaching Subject Matter, 61 percent of the alternative-school sample reported that they were Never Told What To Do, while only 27 percent of the public school sample reported this. For Character Development and Maintaining Control in alternative and public schools, the percentages were 57 to 38 percent, and 52 to 27 percent, respectively. For Record Keeping, 55 percent of the alternative-school sample said they were Never Told What To Do, while only 8 percent of the public school teachers reported this.

To supplement this data, Table 3 presents the median values of actual and preferred task performance autonomy for respondents in the public and alternative schools.

TABLE 3

Median Values for Amount of Freedom in Task Performance

Task	Amount of Freedom Respondent Has for Task Performance		Amount of Freedom Respondent Reports He Should Have for Task Performance	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.1
Character Development	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.1
Maintaining Control	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.1
Record Keeping	3.3	1.3	2.6	1.3

Scale: (1) You alone decide how the task will be done, (2) You consult with other people and then you decide how to do the task, (3) You consult with other people and then you decide together how to do the task, (4) Someone tells you how to do the task, and (5) There is a standard operating procedure you are supposed to follow.

Table 3 demonstrates that in every case the respondents in alternative schools reported that they had, and should have, relatively higher levels of task performance autonomy than their public school counterparts. (Note that low median values signify high levels of autonomy.) These consistent differences between levels of both actual and preferred autonomy in alternative and public schools are surprising when we notice that the differences occur even though the levels of actual and preferred autonomy reported by both groups are very high.

Within the public schools, for all tasks but Record Keeping, 83 percent or more of the respondents reported that they had Considerable or a Great Deal of Freedom in task performance activities. For those in alternative schools, the figure was never less than 96 percent. For preferred autonomy, both groups desired even more autonomy than they already had. For all tasks but Record Keeping, 94 percent or more of the public school participants felt they should have Considerable or a Great Deal of Freedom in performance activities, and not less than 97 percent in the alternative schools felt the same way.

We found a differential perception of actual and appropriate organizational arrangement for the more inert task, Record Keeping. The difference existed within both school groups, although alternative-school respondents still had, and desired, higher levels of autonomy. In public schools, 39 percent of the teachers reported they had Considerable or a Great Deal of autonomy for Record Keeping, while 79 percent of the alternative-school teachers reported this. For preferred autonomy, 49 percent of the public school teachers, and 80 percent of the alternative-school respondents, felt that they should have Considerable or a Great Deal of autonomy. Thus, although levels of actual and preferred autonomy were high for both samples, alternative-school respondents consistently reported that they were, and ought to be, higher in autonomy than their public school counterparts.

Frequency of Evaluation

Although alternative-school respondents reported that they had and should have more task performance autonomy, they received more evaluation in general, and more negative evaluation, than did their counterparts in public schools. Table 4 compares the median frequency with which public and alternative-school teachers reported they learned the evaluations of principals, other teachers, students, and parents.

TABLE 4

Median Values for the Frequency of Evaluation

Task	Principal's Evaluation		Colleagues' Evaluation		Students' Evaluation		Parents' Evaluation	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	4.0	3.6	4.4	3.8	2.9	2.1	4.1	4.3
Character Development	4.2	3.9	4.7	3.3	3.6	2.3	4.4	4.0
Maintaining Control	4.2	4.1	4.7	3.8	3.3	2.3	4.8	5.0
Record Keeping	4.9	6.2	5.9	6.3	5.5	6.6	6.0	6.6

Scale: (1) Very Frequently, (2) Frequently, (3) Fairly Often, (4) Occasionally, (5) Seldom, (6) Almost Never, (7) Never.

Note: These are evaluations that the teacher learns of.

From Table 4, it can be seen that for all tasks except Record Keeping (which is less likely to be performed in alternative schools, and is thus less likely to be evaluated), teachers in alternative schools receive, in general, relatively more frequent evaluations than do public school teachers. The task of Record Keeping underlines an important difference between public and alternative schools. Only for Record Keeping did participants in public schools report receiving relatively more evaluations. This is especially interesting since it reveals the same general tendency in evaluations made by principals, other teachers, students, and parents. It is also important to note that, especially for the task of Character Development, alternative-school respondents were a good deal more likely to learn the evaluations of other teachers and students than were public school teachers. Fifty-five percent of the alternative-school respondents reported that they Very Frequently, Frequently, or Fairly Often learned the evaluations of other teachers on the task of Character Development, compared with 27 percent of the public school teachers. For student evaluations of Character Development, 77 percent of the alternative-school teacher reported they learned evaluations Very Frequently, Frequently, or Fairly Often, while only

48 percent of the public school teachers reported this. Thus, the general pattern seems to be that alternative-school respondents are more likely to receive evaluations of their performance than are public school performers.

Our study showed that the relative frequency of negative evaluations is higher in alternative than in public schools. Table 5 compares the median frequency that respondents in both schools reported they received negative evaluations of their task performance.

TABLE 5

Median Values for the Frequency of Negative Evaluations

Task	Principal's Negative Evaluation		Colleagues' Negative Evaluation		Students' Negative Evaluation		Parents' Negative Evaluation	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	6.4	6.8	6.4	6.4	5.2	5.1	6.2	6.5
Character Development	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.0	5.9	5.2	6.7	6.4
Maintaining Control	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.4	5.6	5.3	6.8	6.7
Record Keeping	6.7	7.1	7.3	7.6	6.9	7.6	7.3	7.6

Scale: (1) Always, (2) Almost Always, (3) Usually, (4) Fairly Often, (5) Occasionally, (6) Seldom, (7) Almost Never, (8) Never.

Table 5 demonstrates that alternative-school educators receive relatively higher frequencies of negative evaluation from their students for all tasks except Record Keeping. However, public school teachers learn negative evaluations from their principals with a slightly higher frequency than do alternative-school teachers. This is understandable when we recall that teacher evaluation is one of the main tasks assigned to principals in public schools, whereas only a minority of alternative schools even have principals. Thirty-five of the 100 alternative-school

respondents reported that they had principals in their schools. Finally, public school teachers are more likely to receive negative evaluations from parents for Record Keeping and Teaching Subject Matter, and alternative-school educators are more likely to receive negative parent evaluations for Character Development and Maintaining Control. Thus, the relative frequency of negative evaluations of parents received by public and alternative-school teachers is in approximate balance.

Table 5 also reveals the extremely low frequency of negative evaluations in both public and alternative schools. Despite the differences noted above, most respondents reported that they Seldom, Almost Never, or Never received negative evaluations from their principals, other teachers, students, and parents. These responses are surprising in view of the common stereotype of the alternative school in which openness and free communication are expected to prevail. In fact, although alternative-school respondents received relatively more negative evaluations than did public school teachers, the climate of evaluation seemed little different from that found in public schools.

Background and Orientation of Respondents

Let us turn our attention to the teachers themselves, to see whether their backgrounds and orientations are consistent with the task differences we have found, the conceptions of these tasks, and the autonomy of the teachers. Knowing the characteristics of the teachers will also help us understand their images of the future and their willingness to attack the systems of which they are a part. We will begin with objective measures such as sex, age, experience, and education.

The respondents in our alternative-school sample were evenly divided between the two sexes, 48 percent male and 52 percent female. Only 28 percent of the public school teachers were male and the remaining 72 percent were female. The median age of respondents in the alternative schools was approximately 26 years, while that in the public schools was close to 39 years. As we expected, the years of teaching experience claimed by respondents corresponded to the difference in ages. Fifty percent of the public school teachers had taught nine years or more, while the majority of the alternative-school teachers had taught three years or less.

Whereas 26 percent of the alternative-school teachers reported that they had received no college degree whatsoever, all of the public school teachers had teaching credentials and Bachelor's degrees. On the other hand, 44 percent of those in alternative schools had Bachelor's degrees, 18 percent had Master's degrees, and one teacher had a Ph.D. Public school teachers did not do much better in the category of advanced degrees, for they reported only 24 percent with Master's degrees and none with a doctorate. Fifty-six percent of the respondents in alternative schools had attended prestigious institutions, whereas only 19 percent of the public school sample had done so.

In summary, compared to teachers in public schools, alternative-school teachers tended to come from institutions of higher prestige, were more likely to have dropped out of their colleges or universities, were almost as likely to have earned advanced degrees, and were more likely to be male and younger and less experienced.

The Contributions of Training, Experience, and Personality to Success as a Teacher

Many teachers in alternative schools had a relatively low regard for the importance of specific training in education as a factor leading to success. We see this attitude as part of their rejection of the public school institutional structure. While only 14 percent of the alternative-school teachers perceived that training was or might be Very or Extremely Helpful in carrying out their work, 40 percent of the public school sample felt this way. Looking at the negative end of the same scale, 62 percent of the alternative-school teachers, and 21 percent of those in public schools saw training as only Slightly or Not at All Helpful in the performance of their duties. These results are surprising when compared to the perceptions of other professional groups. Marram (1972), in her study of nurses, showed that 85 percent of the nurses investigated perceived training to be Extremely Helpful or Very Helpful in the performance of their duties. Schools of education can certainly feel some insecurity when 20 percent of those employed within the traditional system see little value in their training, and when only 40 percent regard it as a significant factor in the performance of their duties.

Similarly, alternative-school teachers reported that they read less professional literature than did public school teachers. This fits the alternative-school conception that the profession has little knowledge to transmit. Again, a comparison of percentages may prove enlightening. Sixty-two percent of the public school teachers investigated reported that they read professional literature Fairly Often, Frequently, or Very Frequently, while only 32 percent of the alternative-school respondents indicated this level of interest. The majority of alternative-school teachers did not read the literature of the teaching profession.

For both public and alternative-school respondents, teaching experience was a factor of considerable importance in classroom success. Experience in the classroom was considered slightly more important by public school teachers than by alternative-school teachers. Thus, 94 percent of the public school respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the statement suggesting that classroom experience is an important factor in successful teaching, compared to 79 percent of the alternative-school sample. For both groups, experience at work was far more helpful than formal professional training. Again, we see a lack of confidence, even among public school teachers, in the institutions and research of the teaching profession.

Personality was viewed by most teachers as a key to successful teaching. Although the number agreeing with the statement, "In general, the

personality characteristics of the teacher are more important in determining success in teaching than any particular knowledge or set of skills the teacher possesses," was slightly higher in alternative schools than in public schools (88 percent to 78 percent), the difference between the two groups was surprisingly small. Both groups considered personality more important than any level of professional skill, no matter how the skill was acquired. This indicated a widely shared lack of confidence in teaching as a profession.

It was mentioned in a previous section that teaching in an alternative school is far from being an idyllic and completely satisfying experience. Nevertheless, 82 percent of the respondents in alternative schools stated either that it was Unlikely or that there was No Possibility that they would leave alternative schools to work in public school systems. This finding emphasized the typically negative view they held of public education. However, it does not at all imply that most radical educators are ready to commit their entire working lives to an alternative form of education. High commitment of this sort was much more common among public school participants. While 41 percent of public school teachers believed they would be working in the same job five years in the future, only half that number of alternative-school teachers--21 percent--expected such a future. Even more striking, 22 percent of the alternative-school sample reported that they were likely to be in another type of work within the next five years, compared with only 1 percent of those in public schools. Although a few alternative educators expressed interest in a career in public education, most are likely to move into other occupations such as farming, communal activities, and the pursuit of various crafts.

Instability Behavior

These data are extremely interesting when combined with other information collected on instability behavior within public and alternative-school organizations. Table 6 shows the median response of respondents in both kinds of schools for four types of instability behavior (with low values meaning high frequency): the frequency with which the respondent (a) is dissatisfied with his evaluation, (b) suggests changes within the organization, (c) does not do what he is told, and (d) prevents information from being obtained about his task performance activities.

With regard to Table 6, it is interesting to note the extremely low frequency of teacher instability behavior within both types of schools. The vast majority of respondents reported that they Occasionally, Seldom, Almost Never, or Never engaged in the instability behavior we identified. In addition, it should be noted that although the difference was small in some cases, instability behavior was markedly less common for Record Keeping than for the other three tasks. This suggests that instability responses are more likely to occur in active tasks, where the performer meets unpredictable resistance, than in inert tasks, where performance activities are amenable to standard operating procedures.

TABLE 6

Median Values of the Frequency of Instability Behavior of Respondents

Task	Is Dissatisfied with Evaluation		Suggests Changes		Does Not Do As He Is Told		Prevents Information from Being Obtained	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	5.6	4.7	4.4	4.1	5.0	4.6	6.8	6.7
Character Development	5.7	4.4	4.8	4.0	5.4	4.7	6.8	6.7
Maintaining Control	5.7	4.9	4.4	4.2	5.4	4.6	6.8	6.7
Record Keeping	6.1	6.0	5.7	6.0	5.6	5.7	6.8	6.8

Scale: (1) Very Frequently, (2) Frequently, (3) Fairly Often, (4) Occasionally, (5) Seldom, (6) Almost Never, (7) Never.

It is also possible to explain the fact that in two columns Record Keeping instability behavior is more common in public schools than in alternative schools. This finding probably resulted because many alternative-school teachers did so little Record Keeping that they were unlikely to suggest changes in performance activities, or prevent information from being obtained on how well or poorly they were performing.

With three exceptions for Record Keeping, all the median scores are lower for alternative schools than for public schools. This difference signifies that in all but three cases, alternative-school teachers were more likely to express instability behavior than were public school teachers. We associated the slightly higher level of dissatisfaction we observed in alternative schools with a slightly higher level of instability behavior.

From the alternative-school ideology, one would expect instability behavior and other behavior oriented toward organizational change to be a necessary, built-in component without which dissatisfaction is likely. The ideology of the alternative-school movement leads one to believe that the disagreement and strife which lead to change and are discouraged within

public education are encouraged and accepted within alternative educational environments. Our data showed that this was not true. Although the frequency of general evaluations and negative evaluations were slightly higher in alternative schools than in public schools, the overall frequency of evaluations in both types of schools was low. In addition, although instability behavior oriented toward organizational change was higher in alternative schools than in public schools, the level of dissatisfaction was also higher in alternative schools than in public schools. Rather than being a built-in component of alternative-school organization, instability behavior in alternative schools seems to be a product of the same factors that produce it within public schools.

The Soundness of Evaluation by Students and Parents

Let us now investigate the relationship between perceived teacher and student status and the perceived soundness of student evaluation.

TABLE 7

The Relationship between Student and Teacher Status and the Perceived Soundness of Student Evaluation

Task	Teacher's Opinion of Student Background		Age of Teacher		Years of Teaching Experience		Grade Taught by Teacher	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.23	.24	-.46*	-.11	-.53*	-.02	-.18	-.12
Character Development	.10	.38	-.48*	-.14	-.53*	-.28	.03	-.03
Maintaining Control	.22	.00	-.64*	-.18	-.53*	-.26	-.08	-.29
Record Keeping	.16	.07	-.07	-.29	-.25	-.04	.32	-.08

Note: In this and the following composite tables (Nos. 8-11 and 13-16), positive gamma values are used to represent positive associations and gammas marked with a minus sign represent negative associations. Gamma values significant at the .05 level of confidence will be indicated by "*"; gamma values significant at the .01 level of confidence will be indicated by "**."

Table 7 offers considerable support for our prediction that the status characteristics of teachers and students would affect the perceived soundness of student evaluation. Within public schools, increases in the age of teachers and in the number of years of teaching experience were associated with a decrease in the perceived ability of students to evaluate task performance. This relationship also appeared to be present in the alternative-school sample, but to a lesser degree. One reason for this difference in the level of association might be the powerful client-service ideology in the alternative schools. Our data show that students in alternative schools are thought by their teachers to be more sound in their evaluations than are public school students. This was true for each of the four tasks we examined. For Teaching Subject Matter, 42 percent of the public school respondents felt the evaluations of their students were either Extremely or Very Soundly Based, whereas 59 percent of the respondents gave those responses in alternative schools. For Character Development and Maintaining Control, the relationships were 34 percent to 60 percent, and 39 percent to 56 percent, respectively. Even for Record Keeping, student evaluations were perceived to be more soundly based in alternative schools than in public schools. Only 19 percent of of public school teachers perceived the evaluations of their students for Record Keeping to be Extremely or Very Soundly Based, compared to 45 percent of the alternative-school teachers. From these data, one might conclude that since the evaluations of alternative-school students are more likely to be perceived as soundly based, we have an explanation for the weaker relationship between the independent variables and the alternative-school teachers' perceptions of their students' evaluations.

In general, the teacher's opinion of student-client background was weakly, but positively, associated with the teacher's perception of the ability of students to evaluate the teacher's task performance. As the teacher's perception of student background improved, so, too, did his perception of the ability of students to evaluate performance. Finally, it was surprising to note that the grade taught by respondents was unrelated to the way they perceived the ability of students to evaluate task performance. McCauley (1971) has demonstrated that there is little association between the perceived ability of clients to perform tasks and their perceived ability to evaluate task performance. This probably explains why the evaluations of young children were not perceived to be less sound than those of older students.

Tables 8 and 9 support our predictions about client evaluations of task performance.

Table 8 offers powerful support for our prediction that high visibility to parents of a teacher's task performance and results would be associated with a teacher's perception that the soundness of parent evaluation is high. Only one gamma is not statistically significant at the .05 level or better. We also note that the association is slightly more powerful for the public school sample. Thus, our prediction that visibility of performance and results would be positively related to the soundness of parent evaluation is supported.

TABLE 8

The Relationship between Actual Observations of Task Performance and the Perceived Soundness of Parent Evaluation

Task	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.79**	.60*
Character Development	.70**	.57*
Maintaining Control	.74**	.52*
Record Keeping	.53*	.04

Table 9 demonstrates with student clients further support for the prediction that visibility would be positively related to the soundness of evaluations. The gammas for students are significant at the .05 level or better for all tasks in both public and alternative schools. We may now conclude that both for parents and for students the visibility of performance and results is powerfully related to perceived soundness of evaluation.

TABLE 9

The Relationship between Actual Observations of Task Performance and the Perceived Soundness of Student Evaluation

Task	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.63**	.60*
Character Development	.67**	.64*
Maintaining Control	.74**	.77**
Record Keeping	.70**	.58*

Tables 10 and 11 test our prediction that a high frequency of client-teacher contact would be associated with a high level of perceived soundness of evaluation. Table 10 offers strong support for our prediction

TABLE 10

The Relationship between the Perceived
Frequency of Parent-Teacher Contact
and the Perceived Soundness of Parent Evaluation

Task	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.67**	.33
Character Development	.56*	.40*
Maintaining Control	.56*	.41*
Record Keeping	.51*	.47*

that the frequency of teacher-parent contact would be positively associated with the perceived soundness of parent evaluation. Again we observe, as in Tables 7 and 8, that the relationship is stronger in public than in alternative schools. Table 11, however, lends little support to our

TABLE 11

The Relationship between the Perceived
Frequency of Student-Teacher Contact
and the Perceived Soundness of Student Evaluation

Task	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.12	.13
Character Development	-.07	.13
Maintaining Control	-.03	.29
Record Keeping	-.22	.07

prediction. It shows that there is no association between student-teacher contact and the performer's perception of the soundness of student evaluation. This lack of association can be explained by the characteristics of contact between school teachers and their student clients. Table 12 shows that students have a much higher frequency of contact with teachers than do parents. Therefore an increase in student-teacher contact

TABLE 12

Percentage of Teachers Reporting "Very Frequent" or "Frequent" Teacher-Student or Teacher-Parent Contact, by Task

Task	Frequent Student-Teacher Contact		Frequent Parent-Teacher Contact	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	44%	74%	10%	22%
Character Development	38%	73%	13%	19%
Maintaining Control	46%	76%	12%	19%
Record Keeping	19%	28%	6%	11%

would be less likely to increase the perceived soundness of student evaluation than an increase in parent-teacher contact.

The differences in the frequency of teacher-student contact between alternative schools and public schools may account for the absolute difference in the perceived soundness of student evaluation reported earlier. For each of the four tasks, we noted that teachers in alternative schools perceived students as being more sound in their evaluations than did teachers in public schools. This difference may result simply because student-teacher contact is higher in alternative schools than in public schools. Differential levels of parent-teacher contact in public and alternative schools may also explain why parental evaluation in both schools was of approximately equal importance, since we observed in Table 12 that the frequency of parent-teacher contact in public and alternative schools is nearly equal. One minor observation may be permitted here: the ideology of interaction with the local community by alternative schools was not borne out in our data by any measure of parental contact, influence, or importance. We did not find alternative schools to be significantly higher on any of these measures, as might have been expected from their ideology.

Tables 13 and 14 help evaluate our prediction that the perceived soundness of client evaluation would be positively related to the perceived importance of client evaluators. Table 13 shows that there is a

strong association between the perceived soundness of parent evaluation and the perceived importance of parent evaluation. Table 14 shows the same relationship for student clients, and strongly supports our prediction that the perceived soundness of student evaluation would be positively related to the perceived importance of student evaluation. All but three of the sixteen gammas in Tables 13 and 14 are statistically significant at the .05 level or better. We may therefore conclude that our prediction that the perceived soundness of client evaluation would be positively related to the perceived importance of clients is supported.

TABLE 13

The Relationship between the Perceived Soundness of Parental Evaluation and the Perceived Importance of Parental Evaluation

Task	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.59*	.59*
Character Development	.52*	.88**
Maintaining Control	.51*	.60*
Record Keeping	.43*	.05

TABLE 14

The Relationship between the Perceived Soundness of Student Evaluation and the Perceived Importance of of Student Evaluation

Task	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.61*	.43*
Character Development	.60*	.38*
Maintaining Control	.35	.44*
Record Keeping	.20	.62*

Tables 15 and 16 test our prediction that there would be a positive relationship between the perceived soundness of client evaluation and the preferred level of client influence upon sanctions. The relation of soundness to the actual level of influence has also been included in these tables. The relationship between actual and preferred levels of influence, as perceived by the teacher, will be commented upon below.

Table 15 shows the association between the perceived soundness of parent evaluation and the perceived actual and preferred level of parent influence upon organizational rewards and punishments.

TABLE 15

The Relationship between the Teacher's Perception of the Soundness of Parent Evaluation and of the Actual and Preferred Level of Parent Influence

Task	Perceived Actual Parent Influence		Perceived Preferred Parent Influence	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.63*	.34	.53*	.52*
Character Development	.59*	.58*	.55*	.63*
Maintaining Control	.60*	.53*	.55*	.63*
Record Keeping	.59*	.36	.49*	.48*

In Table 15, all but two of the sixteen gammas presented are statistically significant at the .05 level. It may be concluded, therefore, that a strong positive relationship exists between the teacher's perception of the soundness of parent evaluation and his perception of both the actual and appropriate levels of parent influence upon sanctions.

Table 16 describes the relationship between the teacher's perception of the soundness of student evaluation and his perception of the actual and preferred levels of student influence upon the distribution of sanctions. It shows that the relationship between the soundness of student

TABLE 16

The Relationship between the Teacher's Perception of the Soundness of Student Evaluation and of the Actual and Preferred Level of Student Influence

Task	Perceived Actual Student Influence		Perceived Preferred Student Influence	
	Public School	Alternative School	Public School	Alternative School
Teaching Subject Matter	.23	.11	.41*	.17
Character Development	.06	.11	.05	.15
Maintaining Control	-.03	.27	.33	.42*
Record Keeping	.62*	.32	.33	.26

evaluation and the actual and preferred influence of students upon sanctions is also usually positive, but much weaker than for parents.

The Role of Ideology in Evaluation

It may be ideology, not the perceived soundness of client evaluation, that controls the perceptions teachers have of the actual and appropriate levels of student influence upon sanctions. When we look at the absolute levels of student influence upon sanctions in alternative and public schools, we see that 51 percent of the alternative-school respondents reported that their students were either Extremely Influential or Very Influential, while only 12 percent of the public school teachers reported this degree of influence. We have already noted that students in alternative schools tended to be higher in importance than students in public schools.

Perhaps we have here a situation in which organizational arrangements are based on ideology and not on the conceptions participants have of their tasks. Our study indicates that the importance of parent and student evaluations of teachers is related to the soundness of evaluations. So, too, is the influence of parent evaluations related to the soundness of the evaluations. But students, as the clients most central to the school, are the focus of the ideology in both types of schools. In public schools, students come to learn and, uninitiated in the ways of the world, will not influence organizational sanctions, no matter how their evaluations are perceived. In alternative schools, which are reacting against the lack of influence of students in public schools, students are made highly influential, and this situation, too, is ideological.

Why does this phenomenon appear only for influence, and not for importance? In our opinion, the answer is that importance is cheap. It is not a fixed sum. Any number of people can be highly important evaluators to a task performer. On the other hand, influence is limited, fixed in sum. There are a limited number of organizational rewards and penalties to be distributed. It is crucial for organizations to determine how the influence within the organizations is distributed, while this is not true with importance.

It was mentioned above with regard to Tables 15 and 16 that there appeared to be a relationship of equal strength between the perceived soundness of client evaluations and both the actual and preferred levels of client influence upon sanctions. This is surprising, since one would expect a stronger relationship between the teacher's perception of the soundness of client evaluation and his preferred level of client influence, than between his perception of the soundness of client evaluation and his perception of actual client influence. There may be a balance process at work, in which teachers tend to see what they find acceptable. There cannot be shifts in actual influence as reported by teachers, for variability in client influence could not reasonably relate to individual differences in perceived soundness of client evaluation. Thus it seems that teachers are creating their own images of school organizations.

Examining these aspects of evaluation has demonstrated that, in general, the perceived soundness of client evaluation is related to actual and preferred levels of client influence and importance. The analysis has also suggested that one of the primary factors associated with the perceived influence of students in alternative and public schools is the ideological orientation of these organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study had two main goals. First, we tried to provide systematic and objective data on alternative schools, a new form of educational organization which has sprung from discontent with the traditional educational system in the United States. Our study centered on the processes of evaluation and authority in alternative and public schools, and we attempted to present relevant comparisons between the two types of educational organizations.

Second, we tried to identify the perceptions that teachers in alternative schools and public schools have about the tasks they perform, and about the parents and students with whom they come in contact. These perceptions were, in turn, used to test portions of our theory which predicted that certain teacher perceptions would be associated with actual and preferred organizational arrangements.

In our findings, we have established that teachers in public and alternative schools view their tasks differently. In alternative schools, Character Development is by far the most important task. In public schools, although Character Development is still perceived to be the most

important task, Teaching Subject Matter and Maintaining Control are only slightly less important.

We found that public school teachers, compared to alternative-school teachers, exhibit a higher level of confidence about their performance in the classroom and perceive themselves to be more clear in their goals, and more generally successful. These differences were found for all four tasks, although the differences were smaller for Record Keeping.

We determined that although both groups of teachers felt they had, and should have, high autonomy levels for task performance, alternative-school teachers in every case wanted more autonomy and felt they ought to have more autonomy than did their public school counterparts. This finding was as we predicted, since the public school teachers perceived themselves as higher in clarity, predictability, and efficacy. Our theory stated that persons high in these task dimensions would want less autonomy than those who were lower in these dimensions of task conception, as the respondents in alternative schools were.

We also found that although respondents from alternative schools reported that they had, and felt they should have, more autonomy than public school teachers, alternative-school teachers received more evaluations of all types and more negative evaluations than did public school teachers. Despite the higher relative frequency of evaluations in alternative schools, the general frequency of evaluations for both public and alternative schools was extremely low. Ideologically, the open climate of the alternative school should provide a much more liberated atmosphere for continuing evaluation, but this did not appear to be the case.

One powerful finding was the rejection of the importance of formal training as the primary factor leading to successful task performance as a teacher. Both groups, and especially teachers in alternative schools, tended to see factors other than training as more important for successful teaching. Not surprisingly, experience in the classroom was seen as more helpful. A most striking finding was that personality was perceived by both groups to be the most important factor for success as a teacher. We interpreted this as an indication of a widely shared lack of confidence in both public and alternative-school systems, in teaching as a profession, and in the usefulness of knowledge about the educational process

We found that both public school and alternative-school teachers were unlikely to make instability responses affecting change in their respective systems. However, instability behavior against their looser structure was more common for alternative-school teachers than for teachers in public schools, whose disinclination to cause change may reflect a lack of institutional flexibility and an acceptance of current problems.

We discovered that older and more experienced teachers considered students to be less sound evaluators than did younger and less experienced teachers. We also were able to show that the visibility of task performance or results to the student or parent client was powerfully related to the perceived soundness of client evaluation.

Suggestions for Further Research

Numerous suggestions can be made for further relevant research. We have limited ourselves to three categories.

First, we will consider topics in general organizational research.

General organizational research. It would be extremely interesting to examine further the components of important and influential evaluation. We have established a relationship between the perception that an evaluation is sound and the perception that the evaluation is important and influential. But how do visibility of performance and results interact with the predictability, efficacy, and clarity of evaluators to produce sound evaluations and, thereby, a preferred level of importance and influence for the evaluators? And how are teaching satisfaction and other teacher perceptions related to the frequency of evaluation? Increasing the frequency of evaluation might change the perceptions teachers have of the entire evaluation process, especially if evaluations are designed to be helpful. Increased frequency of evaluation might also change unrealistic task conceptions.

Comparison of teachers. It has been noted that teachers in public and alternative schools have different conceptions of the clarity, predictability, and efficacy of the tasks they perform. Do they regard their tasks so differently partly because only people with certain task conceptions move into alternative education? Or are the task conceptions of public school teachers really a defensive attempt to provide protection from criticism?

Aspects of alternative schools. It would be worthwhile to make a longitudinal study of a number of alternative schools, focusing on the types of clients these schools serve; a comparison of the achievement records of students in alternative schools and public schools; ways the traditional educational system is subverted by alternative educators; and the activities of alternative-school students after they leave these educational environments. With regard to the organizational structure of alternative schools, it would be important to determine to what extent these schools can survive without some degree of organizational formalization.

Finally, it would be most interesting to conduct a long-term systematic study that would attempt to relate the ideology of alternative schools to their actual practices. We dealt only briefly with 24 institutions over a few months. Our view was necessarily limited. The more time we spent in these schools, the more we realized the complexities of these innovative organizations. It seems that much more comprehensive studies are needed, not only to describe the alternative school, but also to determine whether alternative education is an unattainable utopia or a rational possibility inside and outside the tax-supported system of public education.

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